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# Montana Post

## Volume 41, Number 3 * Autumn 2003

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## From the Director

Arnie Olsen

Thanks to a lot of hard work by our staff, our volunteers, and our friends at the City of Helena Civic Center, this year's Western Rendezvous of Art was a rousing success.

The Society made many new friends and some money to boot as the twenty-fifth annual Rendezvous shattered total sales and attendance figures. More than four hundred people from across the nation attended the gala wrap-up banquet and art sale on August 23. Hundreds more attended the public art show at the Civic Center during the four-day event. The reception at the Society was a smashing success as over three hundred people toured our galleries and ate barbecue on the lawn. Many were amazed at our collections.

The final sale and the Quick Draw auction generated more than $400,000 total sales, which was up by more than 24 percent from the previous year. Final expenses are still being calculated as of this writing, but the Society's share of the proceeds will be up several thousand dollars more than the $30,000 garnered last year. Those proceeds support the Society's New Art Acquisition Fund, our only source for purchasing the art that will be

important history in future years.

This year we were pleased to institute the Rendezvous Legacy Award, which went to Barry Eisenach of Colorado for his sculpture, *Fancy Shawl Dancer* . The Historical Society will give the award each year and will purchase the winning painting or sculpture for our permanent collection. Our new legacy collection of art has grown from one painting a year ago to ten total pieces-not only through our purchases the last two years using the proceeds generated from the Rendezvous, but also through generous donations of art by various Rendezvous buyers directly or in their wills.

We can't emphasize enough the important role our volunteers play in making the Society a success. For this year's Rendezvous forty-two volunteers put in more than 192 hours of service without which we could not have pulled the event off. Thanks is inadequate, but we offer it wholeheartedly.

Our curator emeritus, Society board of trustees member, and father of the Rendezvous Bob Morgan offers some more good news with word that at least twenty-five patrons of the prestigious Prix de West art show held annually at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma have already made arrangements to come to next year's Rendezvous. We are making some big waves in the western art world, Bob tells me, and some of its biggest fans are coming out to Montana to see what we are all about.

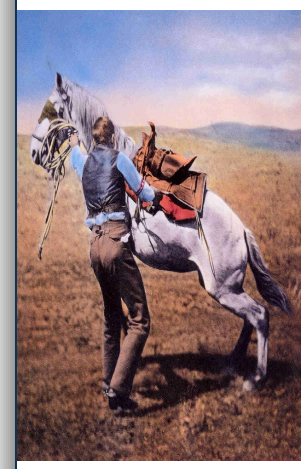
Part of our job is to put a proud face on our beloved Montana, and the Rendezvous is one of the ways we do that. If you made Rendezvous this year, thank you. If you didn't, come join us next year for some great art and great fun under the Big Sky.

## Montana History Conference Brings Treasures to Light

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Montana History Conference. The conference, "Montana, A Treasured Place," will be held October 23-25, 2003, in downtown Helena at the new Best Western Helena Great Northern Hotel. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and new ones. Exciting workshops, sessions, and tours will explore treasures of Montana's past-from dinosaur remains to Depression-era photographs. Brochures were mailed in early September; if you did not receive one but would like to register for, or learn more about, the conference, please visit our website at www.montanahistoricalsociety.org or call 406-444-2694.

## Two New Exhibits to Open in October

The exhibit *Youth Discover the Lewis and Clark Expedition* will open in the Museum Lobby October 4, 2003, and will remain on display through April 2004. The exhibit will feature photographs, quilts, pastels,, and artwork in other media illustrating episodes from the Corps' journals and the Montana landscape. Montana students from second through eleventh grade created the artwork during the course of their study about the expedition. The artists hail from Butte, Chester, Clancy, Corvallis, Grass Range, Great Falls, Havre, Lodge Grass, and Noxon; several of them will be in attendance at the opening, which will include a chapeau de bras- making activity for kids.



On October 23, 2003, in conjunction with the state history conference, Montana's Museum will open an exhibit devoted to the photography of L. A. Huffman. Huffman came to Fort Keogh in 1879 as post photographer and later operated photographic studios in nearby Miles City. While he had a special interest in documenting the "picturesque industry" of cattle ranching, Huffman also took exceptional photographs of Cheyenne and Crow Indians, military life, the slaughter of the buffalo, and the Custer Trail Expedition in 1916. *L. A. Huffman: Photographer of the American West* will feature a wide variety of vintage prints and related memorabilia loaned by Huffman experts Gene and Bev Allen. The exhibit will remain in the museum's Reflections Gallery through April 2004.

## Society Mourns Death of Gray Mackay

Honorary chairman of the 2003 Western Rendezvous of Art Gray Mackay died September 5, 2003. She was ninety-two years old. Born March 22, 1911, Gray married Malcolm "Bud" S. Mackay, Jr., in 1931. Bud was the oldest child of Malcolm and Helen Mackay, longtime friends and patrons of Charles M. Russell. Discerning art collectors, the senior Mackays purchased some of Russell's best work, including such notable oils as *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, *Charles M. Russell and His Friends*, and *Indians Discovering Lewis and Clark* . After Malcolm Sr.'s death, the Mackay family decided to share Russell's legacy with the public. In 1952 they sold their collection to the State of Montana for $50,000, a fraction of the art's worth. The Mackay Collection of Charles M. Russell Art remains on permanent display at the Montana Historical Society. In recognition of her role in the transfer of this great Montana treasure, the Montana Historical Society's Board of Trustees recently named Gray Mackay "Curator of Art, Emeritus." She is only the second

person so designated in over one hundred years. Herself an active patron of western art, Gray Mackay's death leaves a hole in the art world. According to MHS Director Arnie Olsen, "Gray Mackay's legacy extends beyond her personal circle. The entire western art community mourns the passing of this gracious woman."

## New Material Available for Researchers

The Montana Historical Society is pleased to announce three new important acquisitions, which are now available for use in the Research Center by historians, genealogists, students, and other researchers.

The records of the Montana Office of Public Instruction's Certification division, which include Montana teachers' applications for certification from 1895 to 1960, are now available at the Research Center on over 100 rolls of microfilm. Offering valuable genealogical and research information about Montana's educators, each application includes demographic information about the teacher, including name, age, and residence, as well as information on his or her education, often including college transcripts.

Researchers can now also access the records of the Fifty-eighth session of the Montana Legislature. Consisting primarily of minutes and exhibits from committee hearings, these records provide comprehensive documentation of the most recent legislative session and add to the Society's collection of legislative records, which date to 1864 and the first territorial session.

Sixty oral histories (tapes and transcripts) with homesteaders, timber workers, merchants, and long-time Noxon-area residents compose the core of the collection recently donated by Mona Vanek, author of *Behind These Mountains* . Some of the oral histories were recorded in the 1960s, and the collection contains recollections that date to the turn of the century. The collection also includes maps, research notes, newspaper clippings, and other material. For more information about any of these collections, contact the Research Center reference staff at 406-444-2681 or mhslibrary@mt.gov

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## Montana Heritage Project Receives National Attention

Rural Roots

Students Assume Critical Role as Community Historians

A student/teacher collaboration that encourages high school students to compare Montana's historic community life to today's community patterns, the Montana Heritage Project is currently featured in two national publications. The George Lucas Educational Foundation's magazine, *Edutopia* http://www.glef.org, and the Rural School and Community Trust's newsletter, *Rural Roots* http://www.ruraledu.org/roots/roots.htm %2, C have, both run cover stories on the Project. Both articles have strong praise for the project, which *Rural Roots* calls "an innovative program . . . working to forge bonds between rural students and the communities they call home."

Interest from other states in the Project's work remains steady. Dorothea Susag, a Project teacher from Simms, just returned from Phoenix where she helped train teachers in the new Arizona Heritage Project. In October, teacher Nancy Widdicombe from Harlowton will speak at the American Folklore Society's annual conference in Albuquerque.

Closer to home, the Project will also be featured at the MEA/AFT conference in Billings this October, where students and teachers will give presentations and Project Director Michael Umphrey will deliver a keynote. The project, which is housed within the Society, is funded by the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation.

## History Happenings

Allan Mathews's *Guide to Historic Missoula* , volume 6 in the MHS Press's Montana Mainstreet series, received a Certificate of Commendation for excellence from the American Association for State and Local History. The award recognizes outstanding accomplishments in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history.

On September 4, 1973, Lory Morrow, a young graduate student from the University of Montana, arrived at 225 N. Roberts Street to begin cataloging the "picture collection." Thirty years later the Montana Historical Society is celebrating Morrow's thirtieth anniversary with the agency. From her first job cataloging photographs and helping researchers to her present supervisory position, Morrow has been an outspoken proponent for the dissemination of the visual record. In the process she has overseen 2,770 donations of photographs; filled 11,616 orders for photographic reproductions; and managed the growth of the photograph archives from 30,000 to over 400,000 images.

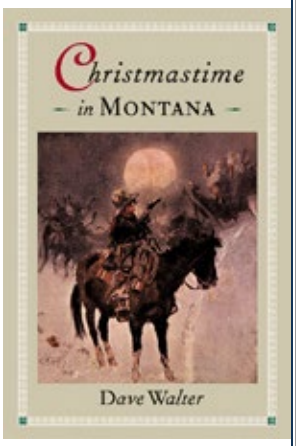
The new MHS website is now up and running! For the past eight months we have been working with DiscoveringMontana.com to create a website designed to improve the visitors' experience. The new site loads more quickly, offers a more flexible interface, and provides greater accessibility to users with physical limitations and visual impairments. Visit the new site at http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org

For the second consecutive year an essay in *Montana The Magazine of Western History* has won the Forest History Society's Theodore Blegen Prize for best conservation article. This year's winner was "Wrestling with Horace Albright: Edmund Rogers, Visitors, and Bears in Yellowstone National Park," by Alice Wondrak, a two-part article that appeared in the Autumn and Winter 2002 issues.

The Benton Avenue Cemetery in Helena was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 24, 2003. Established in 1870, the cemetery holds the graves of hundreds of the city's pioneers.

Retired U.S. Army colonel Dennis Drake joined the Society in August as Chief of Operations. He is responsible for internal operations and assisting the director in the external promotion of the Society through public relations and marketing efforts. The position was previously held by Marcella Sherfy, who now works for the Society's Montana Heritage Project.

## Christmastime in Montana, by Dave Walter, will be available from the Montana Historical Society Press in mid-October.




A revised edition of *Christmastime in Montana*--a holiday classic compiled by Society historian Dave Walter--will be available from the Montana Historical Society Press in October. This 264-page, richly illustrated book depicts two centuries of Montana Christmas history and tradition. From shoot-outs and dances in Virginia City to the finery of a Billings hotel, from dinner with friends to visits from Santa, from lonely nights away from home to joyful family celebrations, *Christmastime in Montana* offers a glimpse into Christmas past. Books will be available at local stores or through the Montana Historical Society Museum Store for $15.95 plus shipping by calling 1-800-243-9900.

Montana Historical Society's volunteer organization, the Friends of the Society, elected Pat Mandeville as president for 2003-2004. If you are interested in joining the Friends, contact Delight Sullivan at 406-444-9553.

In addition to volunteering in a variety of departments, the Friends also sponsor a public lecture series. This year, the Friends have moved the free lecture series from noon to 7:00 p.m. to make it easier for members of the public to attend. Held on the second Thursday of the month, the Friends lecture series will include talks on the Florence Crittenton Home and the Bair Mansion in Martinsdale. Staff presentations on the work of the Society will enrich the Friends regular meetings on the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m.

After several years' absence, *Montana* is once again delighted to offer slipcases for storing back issues. Slipcases may be ordered directly from the manufacturer, TNC Enterprises, 215-674-8476 or www.tncenterprises.net/mt.html

Correction: Rocky Mountain College in Billings is the alma mater of the Society's new technical service librarian Jennie Stapp, not MSU-Billings as reported in the Spring Post.

Society Director Arnie Olsen, National Register Coordinator Kate Hampton, and National Register Sign Program Researcher Martha Kohl attended the Roosevelt Arch rededication in Gardiner, Montana, on August 25, 2003. The hundred-year-old arch is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and as part of the ceremony Olsen helped unveil a sign created by the Society commemorating the arch.

The Membership Program's inaugural MHS calendar is proving popular. Calendars are availa, ble for free to m, embers who upgrade their membership level. Calendars may also be purchased through the MHS Store by calling 800-243-9900.

In its role as an advocate for Montana's historical resources, the Society has been active in publicizing the plight of the Bair Ranch Museum in Martinsdale, which was closed last February by the%, 20manage, rs of the Alberta Bair family trust. Friends of the Bair Ranch Museum, who are pursuing a number of avenues to secure its future, recently retained Billings attorney Cliff Edwards to represent them in conversations with the trust. Groups or individuals who want to assure that the Bair's collection of Montana and western artifacts remain in Martinsdale and accessible to the public can contact Jamie Doggett at 406-547-2190, or via email at cattlqn@ttc-cmc.net

"A Regional Workshop on Preserving Place and Culture" held at Polson, Montana, on July 20-22, 2003, and cosponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office, drew nearly one hundred participants from Montana,

Wyoming, North Dakota, and Idaho. Attendees were full of praise for the workshop's sessions, which covered topics from conservation easements and revolving funds to tribal perspectives on preservation and National Heritage Areas.

The Bob Morgan limited edition print, *Montana's First Governor's Mansion*, which depicts the Original Governor's Mansion, is now available for sale. One of the 250 limited edition prints costs $85; twenty-five special artist proofs with a remarque by Bob Morgan are available for $125. To order a print, contact Sue Near ( mailto:snear@mt.gov 406-444-4713) or Kirby Lambert ( klambert@mt.gov 406-444-4711). Prints will also sold during the Original Governor's Mansion Holiday Home Tour on Sunday, December 7, 2003. Proceeds from the sale support the mansion's operation and preservation.

## Calendar

All events will be held at the Montana Historical Society, 225. North Roberts St., Helena, unless otherwise noted.

October 4, 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. *Youth Discover the Lewis and Clark Expedition* Exhibit Opening.

In celebration of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, students from across the state created original works of art based on episodes from the journals; landscapes of Montana; oral histories from the tribes; or the contributions and impacts of the expedition to nineteenth-century science, geography, and exploration. Come and view the artwork, meet the artists, and make a chapeau de bras.

October 9, 7:00 p.m. The Bair Mansion: Its Past and Future.

The memory of the Bair family lives on at the Charles M. Bair Family Museum in Martinsdale. Bair made his fortune in ranching and mining, and his two daughters, Alberta and Marguerite, left the home and its collection of art as a museum to be enjoyed by the people of Montana. Montana Historical Society Trustee and Martinsdale resident Lee Rostad will present a history of the home and family and discuss the future of the property.

October 13, 2003, 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. The Montana State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting. City Council's Chambers, City Hall, Forsyth, Montana.

Included on the agenda is the consideration of the Great Falls Central Business Historic District, as well as properties in Lavina, Lewistown, Birney, and Billings. Members of the public are invited to attend. Contact the State Historic Preservation Office for details at 406-444-7715.

October 23- 25: Montana, A Treasured Place.

Join us for the Thirtieth Annual Montana History Conference at the Best Western Helena Great Northern Town Center. Featured speakers include paleontologist Dr. Jack Horner and Lewis and Clark naturalist Dr. Daniel Botkin. The conference brochure and registration information are available on-line at www.montanahistoricalsociety.org.

November 13, 7:00 p.m. The Making of a Good Woman.

Helena' s Florence Crittenton Home was founded circa 1896 as the result of a national movement to rehabilitate "fallen and dissipated women and girls." Its century of service fills a significant and little-known chapter of women's history that touches virtually every community across the state. Ellen Baumler's compelling program explores uncharted territory in the history of women in Montana and features rare historical photographs from Helena's Crittenton Home collection.

December 7, 12:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m. Original Governor's Mansion Holiday Home Tour: A Collector's Showcase.

Tour historic Helena homes and the collections within. Refreshments will be provided at the Montana Historical Society, along with a Christmas ornament-making activity for kids. The Museum Store will be open for holiday gift shopping, and the afternoon will kick off with a talk by Dave Walter on his book *Christmastime in Montana* at 12:00 p.m. Tickets are $10 ($8 for members), which includes admission to the Society, the lecture, and all houses.

**Winter Hours**

Montana's Museum and Museum Store

Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday evening, 5 p.m.-8 p.m.

Closed Sundays, Mondays and Holidays

Original Governor’s Mansion and Capitol Tours

By appointment. Call 406-444-4789 for more information.

**Admission Fees**

$3 per adult, $1 per child. Discounts available for families, tour groups, and members.

**Research Center:**

**Reference Library:** Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays. No admission fee.

**Photograph Archives:** Tuesday - Friday, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Closed weekends, Mondays, and holidays. No admission fee.

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